The Doctrine of Soul & Spirit

I. Introduction & Definition (1st Thess. 5:23)

A. Soul: that which makes a human or animal body alive. In this sense, “soul” & “life” are interchangeable. When the soul departs, the body dies (Gen. 35:18; 1st Kgs. 17:19-23).

1. יָּסֵה nephesh #5315: soul, living being, life, self, person.
2. ψυχή psuche #5590: life, soul.

B. Spirit: that which makes a believer alive unto God. When the spirit departs the believer’s body, the believer’s body dies (Ps. 146:4; Lk. 8:55; 23:46).

1. רוּחַ ruach #7307(7308Aram.): breath, wind, spirit.
2. πνεῦµα pneuma #4151: spirit.
3. Important Note: ruach & pneuma are also used of the Holy Spirit, and spirit beings (both good & evil).

C. Other terms for the invisible part of man

1. Heart: the center. largely synonymous with “inner man” as the center of man’s physical, mental, emotional, moral, & (if he has one) spiritual life. The heart of the unbeliever is entirely focused on self, and God must create a new and clean heart for the believer.
   a. לֵב leb #3820 (3821Aram) & לֵבָב lebab #3824 (3825 Aram): inner man, mind, will, heart.
   b. καρδία kardia #2588: heart, inner self, mind, will.
   a. διάνοια dianoia #1271: mind, understanding.
   b. νοῦς nous #3563: mind, thought, reason, understanding.
3. Inner Man
   a. רֶבקֶה qereb #7130: inward part, innermost being.
   b. ἐνθρόσκος enthroskos #2080 + #444: the inner being, inner nature.

(Dενθρόσκος the outer man (body)) #7356 (#7359 Aram) & σολάγγιον #4698.

4. Terms related to emotions: ἐρατίνε ṯα ραχαὶ miym #7356 (#7359 Aram) & σολάγγιον #4698.

D. Body

1. בָּשָׂר basar #1320: flesh, body. (בָּשָׂר b'sar #1321 Aram)
2. σῶµα soma #4983: body.
3. σάρξ sarx #4561: flesh. The aspect of the body that is fallen & weak. The no good thing within the body that motivates and manufactures personal sin.

II. The Soul: Development & Application

A. The creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7).

1. He formed Adam’s body out of the dust.
2. He breathed into him the breath of lives (חַיִים nishmath chayyiym).
3. Man became a living soul (חַיָּה nephesh chayyah, ψυχὴν zosan (1st Cor. 15:45)).

B. The soul is essentially the person. As a result, the word “soul” often refers to the entire person (Lev. 4:2; 5:1f; 7:20; 19:8; Acts 2:41; 7:14; 27:37).

C. The soul is the invisible part of man that recognizes unmet needs.

1. Food & drink (Dt. 12:15,20,21; 1st Sam. 2:16; Ps. 107:5,9; Prov. 6:30).
2. Personal possessions (Dt. 14:26).
3. Sexual activity (Gen. 34:3,8; Song. 3:1-4).
5. Intimacy with God (Ps. 42:1,2; 63:1; 84:2).
6. The Lord meets the soul’s every need (Ps. 19:7; 23:3; 63:5; 131:2; Jer. 31:25).

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1 Broad outline developed from The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979 revised edition.
D. The soul is the invisible part of man that expresses various human emotions and experiences.
   1. The soul may be grieved (Job 30:25), bitter (Job 3:20; Isa. 38:15), troubled (Ps. 88:3), dismayed (Ps. 6:3), distressed (Gen. 42:21), unsettled (Acts 15:24), and unstable (2nd Pet. 2:14).
   2. The soul may despair (Dt. 28:65; Ps. 42:6), weep (Ps. 119:28), tremble (Isa. 15:4), and hate (2nd Sam. 5:8; Ps. 11:5).
   3. The soul may also rejoice (Ps. 35:9; Isa. 61:10), love (1st Sam. 18:1,3; Song. 1:7), be made glad (Ps. 86:4), be delighted (Ps. 94:19), bless the Lord (Ps. 103:1,2,22; 104:1,35), and remember (Ps. 103:2; Lam. 3:20).

E. The soul-life of man is bound within the blood of his body (Dt. 12:23; Isa. 53:12).

F. The soul of believers differs from the soul of unbelievers.
   1. It is purified for a sincere love of the brethren (1st Pet. 1:22).
   2. It may prosper regardless of what temporal circumstances the person experiences (3rd Jn. 2).
   3. It is strengthened through Bible teaching (Acts 14:22). It is pierced by diligent Bible teaching (Heb. 4:12).
   4. It is anchored in the hope set before us (Heb. 6:19).
   5. It is tended by spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17), especially the Lord Jesus Christ (1st Pet. 2:25; 4:19).

III. The Human Spirit: Development & Application
   A. Spiritual life is true life, beyond anything in the physical realm (Gen. 2:7; Isa. 42:5; Jn. 6:63).
   B. Spiritual life is a creative act of God (Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9; 2nd Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:9-17).
   C. Unbelievers do not have a living human spirit** (1st Cor. 2:14; Jude 19), only believers have spiritual life (Rom. 8:10; 1st Cor. 2:15; 1st Pet. 3:18; 4:6).

   D. Like the soul, the human spirit is capable of expressing human emotions and experiences.
      1. The spirit may be anguished (Job 7:11), grieved (Isa. 54:6), broken (Isa. 65:14), distressed (Dan. 7:15), & angered (rage) (Ezek. 3:14).
      2. The spirit may also be rejoicing (Lk. 1:47), moved (Jn. 11:33), troubled (Jn. 13:21), provoked (Acts 17:16), & refreshed (2nd Cor. 7:13).

   E. One must have a living human spirit in order to comprehend the Word of God (1st Cor. 2:13,15).
      1. Old Testament saints could learn the Word of God because the Holy Spirit taught them through their human spirit (Job 32:8).
      2. In addition to a human spirit, believers in the Church have the additional anointing of the Holy Spirit which provides the maximum teaching possible (fronts things) (1st Jn. 2:27).

   F. The human spirit is the place where our spiritual activity takes place.
      1. Worship (Jn. 4:23,24; Phil. 3:3).
      2. Service (Rom. 1:9).
      4. Singing (1st Cor. 14:15).
      5. Blessing (1st Cor. 14:16,17).

IV. Soulish vs. Spiritual describes the unbeliever vs. the believer in perceiving spiritual truth (1st Cor. 2).
   A. The Soulish Man (Natural Man) (πνευματικός ἄνθρωπος) refers to the unbeliever with a soul, but no living spirit (1st Cor. 2:14).
   B. The Spiritual Man refers (πνευματικός ἄνθρωπος) to the believer with a spirit capable of learning God’s Word (1st Cor. 2:15).

V. Soulish vs. Spiritual describes the believer’s physical body (1st Cor. 15:44).
   A. The soulish body is the mortal body that perishes (ὁμός πνευμικός).
   B. The spiritual body is the immortal body that abides forever (ὁμός πνευματικός).

VI. Summary & Conclusion—the concerns of the temporal physical body are negligible compared to the concerns of the eternal soul (Matt. 10:28).

** Some Bible teachers hold that unbelievers have no human spirit whatsoever, others hold that the unbeliever actually has a dead human spirit within them. Pharaoh’s spirit was troubled (Gen. 41:8), as was Nebuchadnezzar’s (Dan. 2:13). Ahab’s spirit was sullen (1st Kgs. 21:5). Pastor Bob understands these men to be unbelievers with dead human spirits. (Nebuchadnezzar & Ahab will subsequently become saved, and possibly even Pharaoh as well).